

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7164  
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AMEMBASSY PARIS  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 USBERLIN 1557

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PGOV, WB, UR  
SUBJECT: ABRASIMOV JUNE 26 TELEVISION INTERVIEW REPEATS  
SOVIET HARD LINE ON BERLIN

SUMMARY: IN INTERVIEW WITH WEST GERMAN ARD TV NETWORK  
BROADCAST JUNE 26, SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO GDR PYOTR ABRASIMOV  
EMPHATICALLY CONDEMNED PARTICIPATION OF BERLIN IN EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS, BERLIN GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE'S  
ASSUMPTION OF BUNDESRAT PRESIDENCY, VISITS BY FRG OFFICIALS  
TO BERLIN IN THEIR OFFICIAL CAPACITIES, AND A VARIETY OF  
OTHER ALLEGED WESTERN VIOLATIONS OF THE QUADRIPARTITE  
AGREEMENT. (TRANSCRIPT POUCHED BONN, DEPT.) ALTHOUGH  
ABRASIMOV'S ANSWERS WERE DOUBTLESS PARTIALLY SHAPED BY  
QUESTIONS POSED TO HIM, WHICH MAINLY ASKED ABOUT PROBLEM  
AREAS IN BERLIN POLICY, ABRASIMOV NEVERTHELESS GAVE  
NEGATIVE CAST TO INTERVIEW BY REPEATED STRESS ON WESTERN  
"VIOLATIONS" AND MINIMAL SUGGESTIONS OF PROGRESS IN BERLIN  
MATTERS IN WAKE OF BREZHNEV VISIT TO BONN. REACTION TO  
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ABRASIMOV'S COMMENTS FROM GOVERNING MAYOR'S OFFICE WAS  
RESTRAINED, BUT OTHER POLITICIANS AND EDITORIALISTS LASHED  
BACK IN STRONG TERMS. MISSION ASSESSES ABRASIMOV'S  
COMMENTS AS NOTHING REALLY NEW, BUT IMPACT HAS BEEN SIGNIF-  
ICANT BECAUSE THIS IS ABRASIMOV'S FIRST PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENT  
DEALING AT LENGTH WITH DISPUTED BERLIN QUESTIONS. WE FEEL  
THAT A BRIEF BUT POINTED ALLIED STATEMENT WOULD BE THE PROPER

ALLIED REACTION TO THE INTERVIEW. END SUMMARY.

1. ARD TV STATION INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV WAS TAPED ON JUNE 17, BUT BROADCAST JUNE 26. INTERVIEWER ASKED, AMONG OTHER QUESTIONS, ABOUT ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT (QA) ON BERLIN, SOVIET POSITION ON BERLIN PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS, DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT ON BERLIN QUESTIONS FOLLOWING SCHMIDT-BREZHNEV MEETING IN BONN, QUEEN ELIZABETH'S VISIT TO BERLIN IN COMPANY OF FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, AND BERLIN GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE'S INTENDED ASSUMPTION OF BUNDESRAT PRESIDENCY.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON QA: IN GENERAL TERMS, ABRASIMOV CALLED QA A "GOOD DOCUMENT AIMED AT DETENTE." WEST BERLINERS NOW LIVE UNDER MORE STABLE POLITICAL CONDITIONS THAN THEY DID IN 1971; THEY USE THE TRANSIT WAYS AND MAKE VISITS. FAILINGS LIE NOT IN THE AGREEMENT, ABRASIMOV DECLARED, BUT IN "THE ATTEMPTS OF THE WESTERN SIDE TO VIOLATE IT, TO IGNORE ITS SPIRIT AND LETTER, TO READ INTO THE DOCUMENT WHAT IS NOT IN IT. SOME PEOPLE IN WEST BERLIN AND THE FRG DO NOT LIKE ALL WHICH IS IN THE QA AND BEGIN TO INTERPRET IT IN THEIR OWN WAY, TO SEEK WHAT IS NOT IN IT OR TO SEARCH OUT GREY AREAS." THE SOVIET SIDE, PER ABRASIMOV, EVALUATES THE QA AS AN EXPRESSION OF "REASON AND REALISM IN POLITICS" WHOSE "STRICT OBSERVANCE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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FULL IMPLEMENTATION" BRING ADVANTAGES TO WEST BERLIN. ABRASIMOV ELEVATED ROLE OF GDR LEADERSHIP IN CREATING QA TO ONE OF "DIRECT CO-PARTICIPATION" WHICH "DID MUCH FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF OUR COLLECTIVE WORK" ON THE AGREEMENT.

3. BERLIN AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY: ABRASIMOV MADE REFERENCE TO AUGUST 3, 1976 SOVIET PROTEST TO ALLIED EMBASSIES IN MOSCOW. ATTEMPTS TO INCLUDE WEST BERLIN IN THE PROCESS OF WEST EUROPEAN STATE-POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND TO EXTEND EC COMPETENCE TO WEST BERLIN WERE "NOT IN ACCORD" WITH WEST BERLIN'S SITUATION AS DEFINED IN THE QA AND OTHER AGREEMENTS, ABRASIMOV CLAIMED. A UNILATERAL CHANGING OF THE SITUATION BY DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INCLUDING WEST BERLIN IN THE PLANNED EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS, HE SAID, WOULD BE AN ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION AND "COULD NOT BE PERMITTED" IN CONCERN FOR THE INTEREST OF STABILITY IN THE RELEVANT AREA.

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4. STOBBE'S ASSUMPTION OF BUNDES RAT PRESIDENCY: ABRASIMOV  
TERMED THIS "ILLEGAL," EMPHASIZING THAT THE PRESIDENCY OF  
THE BUNDES RAT WAS ROTATED AMONG MINISTER PRESIDENTS OF THE  
FRG LAENDER - HE REPEATED - LAENDER OF THE FRG; THE QA  
EXCLUDED THE POSSIBILITY OF WEST BERLIN'S ACHIEVING THE  
STATUS OF AN FRG LAND. THE REPRESENTING OF WEST BERLIN AS  
A "LAND" OR PART OF THE FRG, ABRASIMOV DECLARED, WAS AN  
ERROR IN THINKING AND ACTING OF "SOME POLITICIANS."

5. FRG OFFICIALS VISITING WEST BERLIN: IN RESPONSE TO A  
DIRECT QUESTION ON QUEEN ELIZABETH'S BEING ACCOMPANIED BY  
FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT DURING VISIT TO BERLIN, ABRASIMOV  
TOOK GENERAL POSITION THAT TRAVEL TO WEST BERLIN BY FRG  
OFFICIALS IN THEIR OFFICIAL CAPACITIES IN CONNECTION WITH  
VISITS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THIRD STATES PURSUED THE GOAL  
OF DEMONSTRATING THE CLAIMED "BELONGING" OF WEST BERLIN TO  
FRG STATE AND POLITICAL SYSTEM, THUS WAS A "DIRECT CONTRA-  
DICTION" OF THE "CORE PROVISION" OF THE QA (THAT WEST BERLIN  
CONTINUES NOT TO BE A CONSTITUENT PART OF THE FRG AND CONTINUES  
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NOT TO BE GOVERNED BY IT). FURTHER, TRAFFICKING WITH  
LEADING PERSONALITIES OF OTHER STATES AND GOVERNMENTS, HE  
STATED, IS FORESEEN BY THE TERM "OFFICIAL ACTS." "IF, AS

HOST, I RECEIVE QUESTS IN A HOUSE WHICH IS KNOWN NOT TO BE MINE, AND WHERE I MAY NOT APPEAR AS HOST," ABRASIMOV ASKED RHETORICALLY, "WHAT SHOULD THE NEIGHBORS THINK OF MY INTENTIONS?"

6. BINDUNGEN VS VERBINDUNGEN - BERLIN AS FRG LAND: ABRASIMOV STATED THAT THE CONCEPT OF "BINDUNGEN," SO WORN OUT THROUGH USE IN THE WEST, DOES NOT EXIST IN THE QA; THE QA, HE CLAIMED, SPEAKS OF "VERBINDUNGEN" - IN ENGLISH ABRASIMOV ADDED THE WORD "TIES," AGAINST WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAS NO OBJECTIONS. ABRASIMOV CONCEDED THAT THE WEST DOES NOT CONTEST THE WORDS THAT WEST BERLIN IS NO CONSTITUENT PART OF THE FRG, BUT "IN FACT," HE ASSERTED, THIS HAS TO DO WITH AN INTENTIONAL PRACTICE OF NUMEROUS DEMONSTRATIONS, UNNECESSARY FOR ANYONE, AS WELL AS A PRACTICE OF CREATING ALL POSSIBLE PRECEDENTS AND SUPPOSED PROOFS THAT WEST BERLIN ALLEGEDLY IS A "LAND" AND A PART OF THE FRG.

7. BREZHNEV'S BONN VISIT: ABRASIMOV SAID THIS WAS "OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE," NOT ONLY FOR BONN AND MOSCOW, BUT FOR THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN EUROPE AS A WHOLE. WEST BERLIN TOO WAS NO "WHITE SPOT" ON THE MAP OF EUROPE. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT TO BONN WOULD BECOME MORE PERCEPTIBLE (FOR WEST BERLIN) "ONLY IF THE THINGS IN THE COMMON DECLARATION DEVELOP FURTHER. ONLY IN THIS CASE, AND I EMPHASIZE ONLY IN THIS CASE, DOES ANY ONE OF US NEED TO HAVE ANY SPECIAL CONCERN FOR WEST BERLIN."

8. STOBBE VISIT TO MOSCOW: ABRASIMOV INDICATED HE WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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UNAWARE OF ANY "CONCRETE WISH" OF STOBBE'S TO VISIT MOSCOW. "IT IS SELF-EVIDENT," ABRASIMOV OBSERVED, "THAT IF THE QUESTION OF A VISIT WAS RAISED, ONE CAN AND MUST RESOLVE IT WHILE RENOUNCING ANY POLITICAL CONDITIONS UNACCEPTABLE FOR EITHER SIDE."

9. ENERGY: ON THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EAST-WEST ENERGY SUPPLY CONNECTION, ABRASIMOV SUGGESTED THE SOVIETS WERE IN FAVOR OF COOPERATION ON A MULTILATERAL OR ALL-EUROPEAN BASIS. WITH REFERENCE TO AN FRG-WEST BERLIN POWER LINE, HE EXPRESSED "WONDERMENT" THAT "MANY PEOPLE" WISHED THAT WEST BERLIN COULD RECEIVE ENERGY FROM OUTSIDE AND THEREBY ALSO DEMONSTRATE THE ALLEGED BELONGING OF THE CITY TO THE FRG. WEST BERLIN CAN GET ENERGY SIMPLY AND NATURALLY FROM THE GDR, ITS GEOGRAPHIC SURROUNDINGS, HE REMARKED.

10. TENSIONS IN EUROPE - MBFR: ALTHOUGH "CERTAIN CIRCLES IN THE WEST" WHO WERE STRIVING TO CAUSE A RETURN TO POLITICS

OF CONFRONTATION AND THE COLD WAR OBSTINATELY TRIED TO  
MAKE THE SITUATION IN EUROPE WORSE, ABRASIMOV "WOULD NOT SAY"  
THAT THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN EUROPE HAD WORSENER.  
HE SAW NO DANGERS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE IF THE COUNTRIES  
BUILD THEIR RELATIONS UPON THE BASIS OF PEACE, NON-INTER-  
VENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, RESPECT FOR INDEPENDENCE AND  
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, EQUALITY OF RIGHTS AND MUTUALLY  
USEFUL COOPERATION, AND IF POLITICAL DETENTE IS SUPPLEMENTED

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BY MILITARY DETENTE. ASKED WHETHER HE COULD IMAGINE  
A REMOVAL OF SOVIET TROOPS FROM THE GDR IN THE FORESEEABLE  
FUTURE AS A RESULT OF PROGRESS IN THE MBFR TALKS, ABRASIMOV  
REPLIED THAT HE "AGREED FULLY" THAT IN THIS REGARD ONE  
MUST IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AIM FOR PROGRESS. AN APPROX-  
IMATE EQUALITY OF FORCES HAS DEVELOPED IN EUROPE AT PRESENT;  
THE SOVIET UNION WAS FOR THIS EQUALITY AND AGAINST ANY UNI-  
LATERAL CHANGES. IF THE WEST FOLLOWS ITS WORDS WITH DEEDS,  
REAL STEPS, CONSIDERING THE INTERESTS OF ALL SIDES, THEN  
(THE RESULTS) WOULD NOT DEPEND ON THE SOVIETS.

11. ANSWERING THE INTERVIEWER'S QUERY AS TO WHY ANOTHER  
STATUS EXISTED FOR EAST BERLIN THAN FOR THE WESTERN SECTORS,  
GIVEN THE QA LANGUAGE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FOUR-POWER RIGHTS AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES, AND WAR AND POST-WAR AGREEMENTS, "WHICH  
ARE NOT AFFECTED," ABRASIMOV RESPONDED WITH THE QA'S

REFERENCE TO THE EXISTING SITUATION IN THE RELEVANT AREA;  
SINCE 1949 THE GDR HAS EXISTED; ITS CONSTITUTION NAMES  
BERLIN AS CAPITAL. THE SOVIET UNION GAVE OVER TO THE GDR  
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THE SOVIET COMPETENCIES OF THE EARLY POST-WAR PERIOD.  
ABRASIMOV OBJECTED TO THE USE OF THE TERM "EAST BERLIN,"  
WHICH, HE SAID, DOES NOT EXIST IN THE FACTUAL OR JURIDICAL  
SENSE.

12. REACTION TO ABRASIMOV: OFFICIAL SENAT RESPONSE TO  
ABRASIMOV'S REMARKS WAS RELATIVELY RESTRAINED. SENAT  
SPOKESMAN PETER SOETJE, COMMENTING ON BEHALF OF THE  
GOVERNING MAYOR, SAID THEY CONTAINED "NOTHING NEW" AND  
REFLECTED THE OLD AND WELL KNOWN DIFFERENCES OF INTER-  
PRETATION BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND WESTERN POWERS ON THE  
QA. BERLIN'S MAYOR AND SENATOR FOR ECONOMICS WOLFGANG  
LUEDER CALLED THE AMBASSADOR'S ACCUSATIONS "WRONG;"  
THE INCLUSION OF BERLIN IN THE QA WAS PART OF THE  
STATUS OF THE CITY AS IT HAS GROWN UP, ACCEPTED BY THE FOUR  
POWERS; LIKEWISE, THE "DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMATION" OF BERLIN  
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS WAS IN ACCORD-  
ANCE WITH VALID LAW. STOBBE'S TAKING UP THE BUDES RAT  
PRESIDENCY WAS AN ENTIRELY LEGAL EXPRESSION OF FRG-BERLIN  
TIES, LUEDER STRESSED. CDU REACTION WAS SHARPER. BERLIN  
CDU CHAIRMAN LUMMER BLASTED ABRASIMOV'S STATEMENTS, CALLING  
HIS WORDS ON BERLIN INCLUSION IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
ELECTIONS AN "UNCONCEALED THREAT OF CONSEQUENCES DIRECTED  
AGAINST THE APPLICATION OF EXISTING LAWS OF THE CITY." HE  
ADDED THAT "PRESSURE REMAINS UNCHANGED AS THE SOVIET POLITICAL  
MEANS FOR ISOLATING BERLIN; UNCHANGED THE SOVIETS PERSIST  
IN OPPOSITION TO THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF THE FOUR-POWER  
AGREEMENTS WHICH GUARANTEE FRG-BERLIN TIES." BERLIN HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES PRESIDENT PETER LORENZ WARNED THAT  
"THE PROSPECT OF ROSY RESULTS OF BREZHNEV'S BONN VISIT WOULD  
ONLY BE BELIEVABLE IF THE SOVIET UNION FINALLY STOPS DIS-  
PUTING BERLIN'S BELONGING TO THE EC AND TIES WITH THE FRG  
AND STOPS MAKING THEM THE OCCASION OF THREATS." FRG  
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SPOKESMAN IN BONN "DECISIVELY REJECTED" ABRASIMOV'S ASSER-  
TION THAT THE WESTERN SIDE IS ATTEMPTING TO VIOLATE THE  
QA, IGNORE ITS LETTER AND SPIRIT, AND READ INTO IT WHAT  
IS NOT THERE. THE SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT FRG POLICY  
WAS NOT TO CHANGE THE EXISTING SITUATION WHICH ALSO  
CONTAINS RESTRICTIONS, BUT TO MAINTAIN AND STABILIZE IT.

13. BERLIN PRESS GAVE FRONT-PAGE PLAY TO ABRASIMOV'S INTERVIEW AND REACTION TO IT. EDITORIALS IN TAGESSPIEGEL AND MORGENPOST PICHED UP THE THEME OF AMBIVALENCE IN SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FRG. ACCORDING TO MORGENPOST JUNE 27, ABRASIMOV IS "THREATENING AND ENTICING" BONN AT THE SAME TIME. MORGENPOST WARNED THAT SOVIETS WERE USING BONN'S INTEREST IN DETENTE TO UNDERMINE THE POSITION OF THE WESTERN ALLIED IN BERLIN. TAGESSPIEGEL ACCUSED ABRASIMOV OF PLAYING OFF BONN AGAINST WASHINGTON, AND ENDED WITH THE PLAINTIVE OBSERVATION THAT ON THE SUBJECT OF BERLIN'S TIES TO THE WEST, THE SOVIETS ARE "JUST NEVER SATISFIED." FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE JUNE 28 CRITICIZED THE FRG GOVERNMENT'S SLOWNESS IN GIVING UP ITS ILLUSIONS (ABOUT A NEW SOFTER SOVIET ATTITUDE

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ON BERLIN). MORGENPOST ATTACKED GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE ON JUNE 28 FOR NOT REACTING PERSONALLY AND DECISIVELY TO ABRASIMOV'S REMARKS: ONE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE ROLE ABRASIMOV PLAYS IN SHAPING MOSCOW'S BERLIN AND GERMAN POLICIES, MORGENPOST CHIDED.

14. COMMENT: WE AGREE WITH SENAT SPOKESMAN SOETJE THAT THERE WERE NO NEW SOVIET POSITIONS ENUNCIATED BY ABRASIMOV, AND THAT ONE SHOULD NOT THEREFORE OVER-DRAMATIZE THEM. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME ABRASIMOV HAS CONSENTED TO A WEST

GERMAN TELEVISION INTERVIEW AND SPOKEN PUBLICLY ON A LONG LIST OF BERLIN SORE POINTS. (PRIVATELY, OFCOURSE, HE HAS OFTEN MADE COMPLAINTS LIKE THOSE IN THE ARD INTERVIEW.) THE FACT IS THAT HIS UNRELENTING HARD LINE WAS DISAPPOINTING TO MANY GERMANS WHO HAD HOPED FOR A MUTING OF THE SOVIET VOICE IN BERLIN MATTERS FOLLOWING THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S MAY TRIP TO BONN. CONCEDED THAT ABRASIMOV SAID NOTHING NEW, WE WOULD STILL NOTE THAT HE SPOKE IN A MANNER LESS ENCOURAGING THAN HE COULD HAVE. THERE WAS NONE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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OPTIMISM ABOUT NEW GDR-SENAT/FRG AGREEMENTS HE HAD EXPRESSED IN HIS JUNE 2 MEETING WITH STOBBE. HE ALSO STEPPED A BIT FARTHER AWAY FROM THE USUAL DECORUM OF PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS (COMPARE 77 USBER 2881) WHEN HE ACCUSED THE "WESTERN SIDE" DIRECTLY OF VIOLATING, IGNORING, AND READING NON-EXISTENT THINGS INTO THE QA; A MORE TYPICAL PUBLIC FORMULATION WOULD ATTRIBUTE THE DESIRE FOR SUCH MISCHIEF TO "CERTAIN CIRCLES IN THE WEST." END COMMENT.

15. FRENCH, UNSURPRISINGLY, ARE ANGRY THAT ABRASIMOV'S INTERVIEW WAS AIRED ON THE DAY BEFORE HE MET WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO FRG BRUNET.

16. POSSIBLE ALLIED REACTION TO ABRASIMOV INTERVIEW WAS DISCUSSED BY DEP POLADS JUNE 27, TRIGGERED BY REQUEST OF BRITISH EMBASSY BONN. DEP POLADS FELT THAT TERSE BUT POINTED ALLIED STATEMENT IN REPLY WAS BEST COURSE OF ACTION UNLESS OF COURSE ONE OF WESTERN AMBS WAS PREPARED TO BE INTERVIEWED ON TV. ON JUNE 29 BRITISH INFORMED US THAT LONDON AND BRITISH EMBASSY BONN HAD ASKED FOR A SERIES OF TALKING POINTS TO BE PREPARED FOR USE IN RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRIES (OF WHICH THERE HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN ANY THUS FAR). WE WILL STUDY THE TALKING POINTS ALREADY SUBMITTED BY THE BRITISH HERE, WITH THE HOPE OF ARRIVING AT AN AGREED TEXT BY COB JUNE 30. WE FOR OUR PART DO NOT SEE MUCH POINT IN HIDING BEHIND INSPIRED PRESS INQUIRIES; RATHER WE THINK IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE IF ALLIES (PRESUMABLY FRENCH CHAIRMAN FOR JUNE OR BRITISH CHAIRMAN IN JULY) SIMPLY ISSUED THE ALLIED VIEWS AS AN OFFICIAL ALLIED STATEMENT. DAVIS

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